

IX. *Part of a Letter from Mr. B. Sherman to Dr. Hans Sloane, R. S. Sec. concerning the Bones of a dead Fœtus, taken out of the Uterus of a Cow; and of a Callus that supplied the Loss of Part of the Os Femoris.*

S I R,

**Y**OU will receive with this a Curiosity which I thought might not be unacceptable to you; 'tis the Bones of a Calf that perished in the *Uterus* of its Dam after the following manner, as I had the Account from the Person who sold the Cow to the Butcher.

The Cow was very unthrifty, for which they gave her Cow Physick, and such Drinks as they apprehended proper for her; notwithstanding which she grew worse, and continued a great while in a lean, pining, wasting Condition, and was reduc'd to so weak a State, that they concluded she would dye; when on a sudden she began to eat her Meat, and did thrive so very fast, that in Six or Eight Months she was so fat as to be Sold to the Butcher; who, when he kill'd her, found these Bones in her *Uterus*, just as you will see them in the Box, full as dry

dry, there being no manner of Moisture in the Bag (as he call'd it) in which the Bones were contain'd. The same Digestive Humour, which dissolv'd the Skin and Muscular Parts of the Calf, might (I presume) reasonably enough be suppos'd to dissolve the Cartilages, and (for ought I know) even part of the Bones in a *Fœtus*. I am pretty sure what I send you is all the Butcher found, and I believe you will find them compleat; but of what Age the *Fœtus* was, or whether, if the Cow had not been kill'd, there would have been a total Diffolution, I must leave to your more curious Judgment to determine.

I am inform'd by some Physicians to whom I have shewn these Bones, that there are many such Instances in Anatomical Writers; and particularly one of a Woman, whose *Fœtus* dissolv'd so perfectly, that some of the Bones digested through her *Abdomen*, and (which I think is more strange) that the same Woman had Children afterwards.

Whether these Bones would in time have made their way through the *Abdomen* of the Cow, I am not able to judge; all I can assure you is, That these Bones were found as is above express'd, and that the Fact may be proved by Witnesses of undoubted Credit.

### P O S T S C R I P T.

I Could not omit to subjoyn an Observation in my own Practice, which also may not be unworthy your Observation; 'Tis of a Compound Fracture, which happen'd on the Thigh of a Young Man about Seventeen:

venteen : I was oblig'd to take out the whole Substance of *Os femoris* about Two Inches; and yet, by keeping a due Extension, Nature did in four Months supply such a *Callus*, that the Part is not a quarter of an Inch shorter than the other side; and the Person is as strong as ever, and walks without any Lameness.

Keldon near Witham in Essex,  
September 4. 1708.

*Yours, &c.*

B. Sherman.